

ORDER NO. 05-01-17-02
WILLIAMSON ROCK AREA CLOSURE
ANGELES NATIONAL FOREST
SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS NATIONAL MONUMENT

Pursuant to 16 USC 551 and 36 CFR 261.50(a) and (b), and to protect natural resources, the following acts are prohibited within the Santa Clara/Mojave Rivers Ranger District of the Angeles National Forest – San Gabriel Mountains National Monument. This Order is effective from March 24, 2017, through December 31, 2018.

1. Going into or being upon the Williamson Rock Closure Area, as described in Exhibit A and shown on the attached map. 36 CFR 261.53(a).
2. Being on any National Forest System trail within the Williamson Rock Closure Area, as shown on the attached map. 36 CFR 261.55(a).

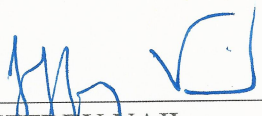
Pursuant to 36 CFR 261.50(e), the following persons are exempt from this Order:

1. Persons with a permit from the Forest Service specifically authorizing the otherwise prohibited act or omission.
2. Any Federal, State or local officer, or member of an organized rescue or firefighting force in the performance of an official duty.

These prohibitions are in addition to the general prohibitions contained in 36 CFR Part 261, Subpart A.

A violation of these prohibitions is punishable by a fine of not more than \$5,000 for an individual or \$10,000 for an organization, or imprisonment for not more than six months or both. 16 USC 551 and 18 USC 3559, 3571 and 3581.

Done at Arcadia, California, this 23rd day of March, 2017.



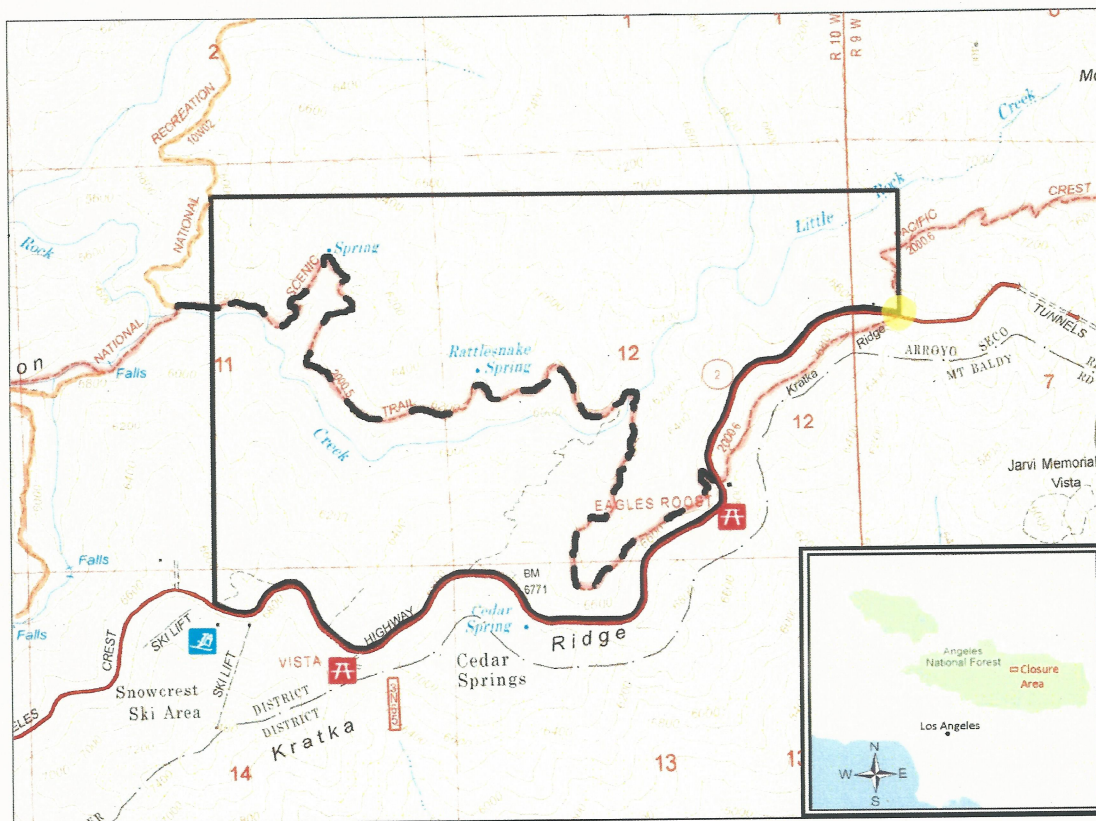
JEFFREY VAIL
Forest Supervisor
Angeles National Forest
San Gabriel Mountains National Monument







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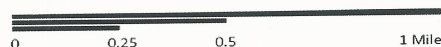
Exhibit A

The boundary of the Williamson Rock Closure Area begins at the intersection of California State Highway 2 (Angeles Crest Highway) and the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail in Township 3 North, Range 9 West, Section 7, San Bernardino Base and Meridian; then continues due north to its intersection with Little Rock Creek; then continues due west to its intersection with the High Desert National Recreation Trail (Forest Trail No. 1 OW02) in Township 3 North, Range 10 West, Section 11; then continues due south to its intersection with California State Highway 2 in Township 3 North, Range 10 West, Section 14; and then continues east along the northern edge of California State Highway 2, back to the starting point.

**ANGELES NATIONAL FOREST
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WILLIAMSON ROCK AREA CLOSURE**



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|--|--|---|
|  Williamson Rock Closure Area |  Boundary Description Begins Here |  Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail |
|  Angeles Crest Highway |  Closed Trail |  High Desert National Recreation Trail |





United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Angeles National Forest
San Gabriel Mountains National
Monument

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File Code: 2670

Route To: File

Date: March 23, 2017

Subject: Forest Order – Williamson Rock Area Closure

From:  Jeffrey Vail, Forest Supervisor

Pursuant to 36 CFR 261, I am issuing Forest Order No.05-01-17-02 authorizing a continued temporary closure of the Williamson Rock area on the Santa Clara/Mojave Rivers Ranger District of the Angeles National Forest – San Gabriel Mountains National Monument. The area affected is depicted on the map attached to the Closure Order. The closure will be in effect from March 31, 2017 through December 31, 2018, and will address concerns related to the protection of the mountain yellow-legged frog (MYLF) and its critical habitat in the area. Hikers using the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail will continue to be re-routed around the closed area.

As part of a larger lawsuit brought by a coalition of environmental groups against various federal agencies, in June 2011 a U.S. District Court Judge ordered the Forest Service to close the Williamson Rock area because of the presence of the MYLF (*Center for Biological Diversity, Los Padres ForestWatch, Sierra Club, Defenders of Wildlife and California Native Plant Society v. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service, and U.S. Forest Service*; No. C 08-01278 MHP, 6/27/2011).

The Angeles National Forest is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement to address the long term resource impacts and mitigation measures that have made it necessary to close the Williamson Rock area to public access.

Interface between recreational forest users and the MYLF is a subject of concern at Williamson Rock. Recreation activities within the creek habitat may lead to disturbance of egg masses, trampling of individual frogs, capture and handling of tadpoles and adult frogs, and generalized disruption of mating and migration. Recreation may also impact habitat by altering streambeds and denuding banks, and lead to the introduction of pollutants and garbage into the creek. Due to remoteness and current lack of facilities, human waste may also contaminate critical habitat because if it is not disposed of properly.

I have concluded that this decision may be categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or Environmental Assessment (EA) under the National Environmental Policy Act. This action falls within the category identified in 36 CFR 220.6(d)(1) – prohibitions to provide short-term resource protection or to protect public health and safety – and does not require documentation in a decision memo, decision notice, or record of decision. I have determined that there are no extraordinary circumstances associated with this temporary closure. Implementation of the decision may begin immediately.



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Public information meetings were conducted extensively between 2009 and 2011 as part of the ongoing efforts to resolve the situation. Meetings were held with representatives of the rock climbing community since the popular rock climbing site (Williamson Rock) is within the area. Public notification regarding the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail re-route has been done and will continue.

In 2017, coordination with the following cooperating agencies has continued:

- Los Angeles County
 - Fire Department
 - Sheriff's Department
- State of California
 - Department of Fish and Game
 - Highway Patrol
 - CalTrans
- U.S. Department of the Interior
 - Fish and Wildlife Service

Additional public involvement activities are planned for 2017-2018 in connection with the Environmental Impact Statement that is underway.